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ABSTRACT

The study provides an overview of the Education and Local Development (ELD) projects conducted in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania as part of the OECD/CERI (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Centre for Educational Research and Innovation) project. The CERI ELD project was planned to investigate: the role education may play in creating the pre-conditions for local development; the role education may play as an agent directly stimulating employment opportunities; the appropriate balance for education's effects on individual fulfillment, community development, and the interests of society as a whole; and the degree to which, and the ways in which, policy makers from both education and development agencies need to work together to achieve development aims. Sections of this report address: the project background; the Australian ELD projects; how education can lead directly to local economic development; how education gives indirect support to local economies; education and local political development; how education can support local society and culture; education as a partner in the provision of joint resources; how education can inhibit local development; unlocking local resources; and the conclusions. (AH)

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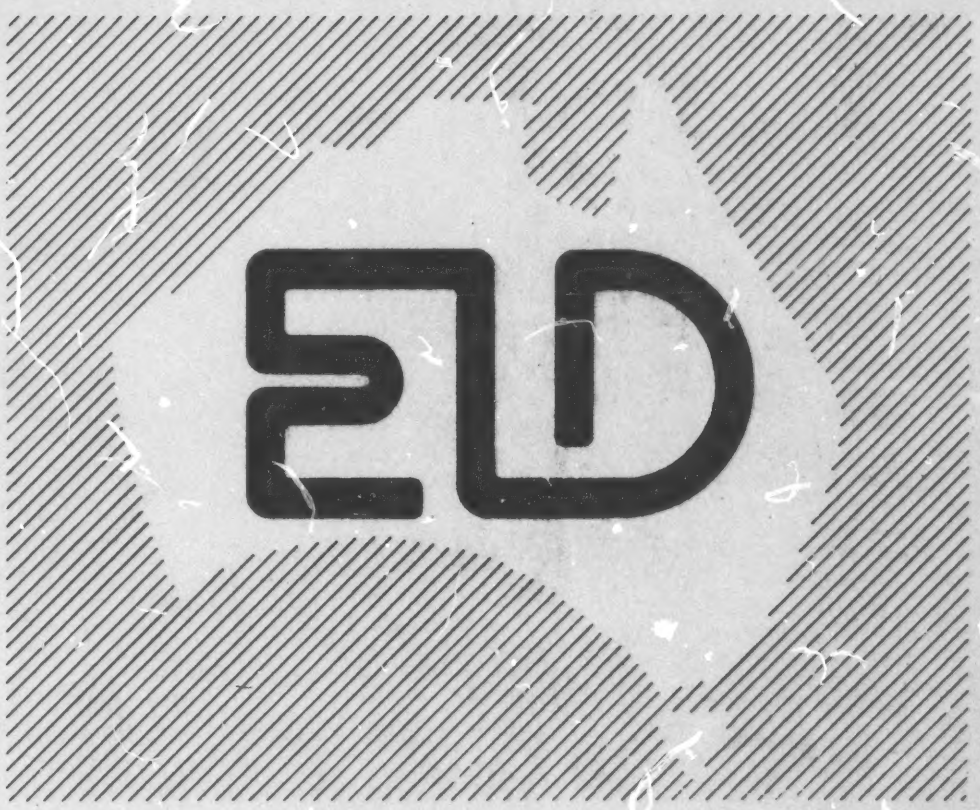

EDUCATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT in Australian Rural Areas

REX STOESSIGER

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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

September, 1982

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EDUCATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

IN AUSTRALIAN RURAL AREAS

An overview of the Education and Local Development projects conducted in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania as part of the OECD/CERI project.

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PREFACE

This overview document brings together many of the experiences arising from Australian involvement in the project on Education and Local Development (ELD) which was initiated by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Australia's participation has involved surveys of policies and programs, case studies and Australian representation at international meetings in Spain, France and Scotland. An Australian ELD Steering Committee was formed in 1980 with members from the Commonwealth Department of Education and the State Departments of Education in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania. The meetings of the Committee led to the preparation of papers synthesising accounts of ELD developments in these four States. These papers were presented at an Australian National ELD Seminar held in Melbourne on the weekend, 7-8 August, 1982.

Through the Tasmanian Department of Education, Dr. R. Stoessiger was commissioned to write the overview document which draws on information from the Seminar and the State ELD synthesis papers. The Seminar was co-operatively organised by the Victorian Department of Education, the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Education. Significant funding for the Seminar was provided by the Victorian Country Education Project. The contributions of the Seminar participants are gratefully acknowledged. The Commonwealth Schools Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Education have each contributed funds which have made production of this document possible.

OECD/CERI EDUCATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Mr. C.L. Beltz (Chairman)	Commonwealth Department of Education
Dr. R. Chapman (1980)	Victorian Education Department
Mr. K. Egan	Victorian Country Education Project
Mr. D. Buchanan	New South Wales Education Department
Mr. A. Pratt (from 1981)	New South Wales Education Department
Dr. R. Stoessiger	Tasmanian Education Department
Mr. M. Angus	Western Australia Education Department
Mr. P. Dunnell (1981)	Western Australia Education Department
Ms. S. Brown	Western Australia Education Department
Ms. V. Barbeler	Commonwealth Department of Education
Mr. F. Maas (1980)	Commonwealth Department of Education
Mr. A.J. Francis (from 1981)	Commonwealth Department of Education

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1. Background to the Australian Education and Local Development Project

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through its Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) has sponsored several international education projects in recent years. In particular, the Education Department of Western Australia represented Australia in the CERI project on Education in Sparsely Populated Rural Areas (ESPRA) and participated with ten member countries of OECD.

In 1979 CERI initiated a new project on the theme of Education and Local Development (ELD) to follow the ESPRA study and again Australia was invited to take part. Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania agreed to participate in this project.

Aim of the CERI ELD Project

The project was planned to investigate principally:

(a) The role education may play in creating the pre-conditions for local development.

(b) The role education may play as an agent directly stimulating employment opportunities.

(c) The appropriate balance for education's effects on individual fulfilment, community development and the interests of society as a whole.

(d) The degree to which, and the ways in which, policy makers from both education and development agencies need to work together to achieve development aims.

The Project Details

The project was seen as having two components.

(a) A survey instrument designed by CERI to determine the range of programs and policies which were seen as contributing to local development.

(b) A number of case studies of the relationship between education and local development.

While the project was envisaged to have both urban and rural component originally, the urban component was not considered in Australia and was later dropped by CERI.

In Australia the survey instrument was circulated to the States and the responses and a national overview were forwarded to CERI.

The four participating States agreed to produce one or more case studies each. The nature and details of the case studies were left entirely to the States concerned. Representatives of the four States and the Commonwealth Department of Education met as a steering committee to co-ordinate the project.

It was agreed that States would publish a report of their own activities and the Commonwealth would organise a seminar towards the end of the project and sponsor an overview paper bringing together the themes and issues emerging from the individual State case studies.

The seminar was held in Melbourne in August 1982 with representatives from most Australian States and Territories attending.

This report is the overview of the Australian project. It is based on the papers produced by the States on their own studies and the ideas and issues raised at the Melbourne seminar. A listing of the State papers is provided in the References section.

2. An Outline of the Australian ELD Projects

The Victorian Project

In Victoria a case study was made of the Country Education Project, (CEP), since its inception in 1977. The CEP is part of the national Country Areas Program set up by the Commonwealth Schools Commission to assist rural and isolated schools.

In Victoria the project was organised by a Planning Committee comprised of representatives from the State, Catholic and Independent School Systems and parents.

The major aims of the project have been to:

(a) Develop a clearer definition of the nature of rural disadvantage and rural education.

(b) Involve local schools and communities in assessing their educational needs, determining priorities and developing and implementing programs based on those needs and priorities.

(c) Encourage the process of co-operation and sharing between all schools and communities in designated rural areas.

(d) Look for new ways of bringing educational experiences to isolated rural schools and communities.

To ensure strong community influence and local control the following project guidelines were established:

* Each project would have a democratically elected committee with at least 50% community representation.

* Control over decisions concerning funds and programs was to be gradually transferred to local committees. Each area was guaranteed annual funding.

* Prior to receiving a budget each area would have to conduct a survey of their needs and resources.

* The Planning Committee determined that the community would receive direct benefit from the Project either through programs for them, or programs which shared resources between school and community.

While a description of how the CEP developed in Victoria is important reading for anyone interested in the "hows" and "how nots" of getting local development projects off the ground it is not possible to summarise five years of growth in the space available here. An entertaining and informative description of the process can be found in

the first half of the Victorian report.

The project did develop along the lines of the guidelines presented above. The various programs developed illustrate how the CEP lead to a variety of social and economic developments. Programs arose from priorities derived from the Area Surveys. Wherever possible programs were established using local resources and local talent. There was also a strong pressure to involve parents in the organisation and running of programs. This helped provide assurances that the programs would continue if a particular teacher left the area as parents would be able to continue the program. This helped to develop the sense that local people could decide the curriculum, whereas it was the task of the professional to implement it. In all programs resources whether human or physical were shared either by moving the equipment, the teachers or both.

The Western Wimmera Area developed a Technical and Life Long Education Program. Courses were designed to suit local community needs and were always of short-term duration. In order to bring the courses to the people classes were held in schools, community halls, wool sheds, church halls and agricultural showgrounds.

Wherever possible local skilled people were used as teachers. In other cases skilled personnel were brought in from outside. In the first year 700 people enrolled in courses ranging from welding and carpentry to leather work and agricultural topics. Participants were charged enrolment fees to make the program self-sufficient.

The Area Committee became a major educational provider in an area where the traditional education system (Technical and Further Education) was either unwilling or not flexible enough to deliver the education local people wanted.

Where classes were held in schools a new co-operation developed between the school and the community. As well the classes had begun to restore the old linkages and networks which had died as a result of school closures and amalgamations. This was genuine community rejuvenation made possible by "co-operative competance".

Music was a priority determined by the needs and resources survey in the Mallee Tracks Area. A local musician was employed to develop a music program in the area and three enthusiasts, turned up by the survey, were employed part-time. Over a thousand musical instruments were found by the survey in homes, town halls and school cupboards. As a result classes are run for children during the day and parents at night. Small recording studios were established which were later combined with television equipment to produce "Community Advertisements" to promote CEP in the area.

Successful programs in other areas included art/craft programs provided in a van that visited local centres and a local drama project which resulted in yearly reviews with massive local support. Portable stage and lighting equipment was purchased and gave local halls a new lease of life. Rotary Clubs in country towns have established links with city clubs to provide a country-city work exchange program. In this way country students are inducted into city culture in a more protected environment. In areas with large migrant populations specific services for the ethnic groups have been developed and ethnic language and culture are being taught in schools.

Area Co-ordinators were employed to assist the project. They were able to strengthen the concept of the Area, to stimulate new ideas and to provide a link to the central Planning Committee. They were local

people locally appointed and soon proved crucial to the project. This eventually led to attempts to develop joint funding with agencies such as Local Government, Youth, Sport and Recreation and Community Education and this was achieved in three of the project areas. For the first time local governments were employing community development people rather than community facilities type people.

The administration of the project evolved with the progressive handing over of power to local area committees. These then formed an association to represent them, and the project, at State level. At the same time the central Planning Committee moved to replace itself with a broader based executive committee.

In June 1981 the original five CEP areas were increased to thirteen. It is interesting to note that this expansion was recommended by the existing areas and, as no extra funding was available, that decision meant that "old" areas effectively took a cut in funding.

The Victorian CEP has shown that, with relatively small amounts of money local people are willing and able to undertake a variety of activities to bring social and economic development to their areas. If funds can be used to encourage people to create innovative solutions to their education and recreational problems, perhaps economic problems could be tackled in similar ways. A number of Project Areas are now looking at the possibility of forming themselves into co-operatives to promote activities within their Areas which have long term economic benefits and which could provide more employment opportunities for their school leavers.

The Western Australian Project

As a result of its participation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/CERI) project on Education in Sparsely Populated Areas the Education Department of Western Australia hosted an international conference in November 1979 to examine new directions that might be taken in rural education.

One of the major sessions at that conference was on Education and Local Development as it was known that this topic would be the next major OECD/CERI activity. After this conference the Education Department commenced the Western Australian ELD project. The aim of this project was to examine the links between education and local development and to see if the education system could be made more responsive to local development needs.

The Western Australia approach was, that if lasting benefit was to come of the project, system policy and practices would need to be influenced and senior officers would need to be personally involved.

The fulcrum of the project was a committee of senior officers with responsibilities in aspects of rural education. Fed into this committee were a number of activities with relevance to ELD and a commissioned research project examining Department-community relations via five different case studies. The five community organisations (local structures) studied were:

* The Carnarvon School of the Air Parents and Citizens' Association.

* The Cascades Community - The Birth of a Community.

* The Geraldton Technical College Advisory Committee.

* The Goldfields Manpower Planning Panel.

* The Mount Marshall Cell of the Priority Country Schools Programme.

These studies are fully documented and are available from the Education Department of Western Australia along with a summary report of the five studies, (Fitzpatrick, 1982 a), a report on the Wagin T.A.F.E. scheme (Cluer, 1981) and a final report of the Western Australian ELD Project (Brown, 1982).

One of the themes emerging from the case studies is, 'local conditions are different'. While it is a basic tenet of education systems to implement standard guidelines to be fair to all, Department officers usually recognise the need for special treatment in particular cases and act accordingly. Sometimes it is beyond the Department's area of responsibility to act and sometimes there is a breakdown in the process of interpreting and communicating policies to local people.

The studies indicate that success in working with the local community was often associated with a particular teacher or principal. This raises the question of whether the Education Department can expect routine teaching appointments to suit all schools or if it has an obligation to try and ensure the best possible outcomes by taking advantage of the previous experience of certain personnel.

Teachers sometimes found their loyalties divided between what was best for the local communities, what might be best for a particular individual and what Department officers had decreed. From the local point of view teachers who committed themselves to the long term interests of the community as distinct from 'outsiders' posted for limited tours of duty were better able to resolve these dilemas in acceptable ways.

The five studies suggest that a central issue is the extent to which the central administration can devolve authority. For programs that are centrally initiated, without feeling of local control and ownership and without decisions being made locally, many locals will not establish mechanisms to incorporate local views and experience. Some form of school board or advisory council has been suggested as a possible mechanism.

The Wagin T.A.F.E. scheme is described in more detail in Section 6. It is a low cost, community based program of informal technical and further education. Existing facilities are used as venues for short T.A.F.E. courses desired by residents of the area centred on Wagin in southern Western Australia. The success of the scheme demonstrates that city based models, in this case T.A.F.E. colleges offering mainly longer term certificate courses, may be quite inappropriate to rural areas. Flexibility in planning and decision making and a willingness to allow local people to decide their own requirements seem to encourage local development to occur.

The final report of the Western Australian ELD project lists eight 'principles' or guides to action distilled from the State project. They are:

* Schools should encourage greater valuing of country life (and schooling should not encourage the out-migration of able youth).

* School facilities and staff should be integrated into community life.

* Curriculum should become consciously more locally relevant.

* Co-ordinated inter-departmental responses to local problems should be routine.

* Local (sometimes unorthodox) solutions and practices should be used to meet local education problems.

* Rural schools should become organisationally less like each other.

* Central authorities should respect the accountability of schools to their communities by devolving sufficient responsibility to these schools.

* Community members should have significant responsibilities in the running of schools.

These are not a static list of absolutes. They were presented to a full meeting of the Western Australian Institute of Superintendents of Education in May, 1982 to seek their reactions and set in train a process of policy re-development for rural education. They were well accepted by the senior Department officers and a large number of practical suggestions were forthcoming.

The ELD committee has initiated a series of policy development activities. These include:

* Exploring whether assistance can be given where principals, or staff, demonstrate incompetence in their dealings with community or exclude a consideration of community point of view from school decision making.

* Examining the extent to which the contribution of principal and staff to fostering strong school and community relations can be taken into account in staffing appointments and transfers.

* The extent to which those administering Transition Programs have fostered courses which are designed to generate self-employment and encourage local social and economic self-reliance.

* Consultation with local communities regarding the provision of educational facilities was identified as an area of considerable importance.

* The establishment of a Business Development Trust Fund is being examined along with other ways for schools to raise and use revenue.

The Western Australian Education Department has used ELD themes to review its approach to education in rural areas. As a result important ideas and innovative practices have emerged. A process of policy re-development has been underway along with a sensitising of senior officers to the role education can have in local development. To an external observer the Western Australian project seems to have exciting possibilities, particularly if ways can be found to hand over the consideration of ELD issues to local communities so that they eventually become the ones planning and acting for their own development.

The New South Wales Project

In this State the Director-General of Education nominated the Riverina Region as the location for case studies for the ELD project. Two case studies were undertaken:

(a) The first eighteen months of administration of the Disadvantaged Country Areas Program in the Riverina Region, and

(b) The curriculum modifications in regional secondary schools aimed at facilitating students' transition from school to work.

The studies were prepared during the period June 1980 to June 1981.

The Riverina Region is one of eleven administrative regions and administers 208 government and 68 non-government schools with over 43,000 pupils in an area nearly as large as England.

(a) The Disadvantaged Country Areas Program (DCAP)

This study was conducted by field trips to the areas involved, attendance at DCAP conferences, the analysis of 1,049 returned questionnaires from involved parents, teachers and pupils, the collection of impressions of the impact of particular projects on video tape, and discussions with administrators of the Program.

As part of the Commonwealth Schools Commission's Country Areas Program the main aim is to widen the range of experiences available to country children by providing educational resources, encouraging teachers and members of the community to work together in determining their needs and by promoting the sharing of existing resources.

Local sub-committees of school and community people and regional management committees were formed. Submissions were prepared and sent to the management committees for consideration by them, by regional administrators, the State Advisory Group and the Minister for Education. Isolation was a major disadvantage identified by many communities. As a result funds were used to convey children to theatrical and musical performances, inter-school sporting fixtures and on excursions. In many cases small schools worked together to provide the numbers to make bus quotes more competitive.

Camping banks, sets of camping equipment housed in box trailers and capable of being towed by teachers' or parents' cars were established.

Materials such as audio-visual equipment, library materials and micro-computers were purchased and centrally located for use by several neighbouring schools. It is planned to make resources available to the community, particularly the micro-computers which have application for local business and use on rural properties. One area has a caravan fitted out for use as a community library. In another a travelling librarian services each school regularly.

There are itinerant specialist teachers offering support to DCAP schools in the areas of Physical Education, Music, Art, Drama and Craft. The itinerant teachers teach with the class teacher present and in this way the expertise of the itinerant teacher is shared.

Community facilities such as halls and basketball courts have been upgraded with DCAP assistance. In several areas neighbouring communities are re-establishing links with each other through attendance at each others' social activities.

DCAP funds have enabled the publication of community newspapers in at least four areas where there is no local commercial newspaper. Paid advertising and a charge for each paper have enabled the papers to become self-sufficient.

A great variety of other activities ranging from toy libraries to dance teaching have been funded.

The Program is believed to have had an important influence on School/Community Development. The sharing of resources and personnel between schools has encouraged and sustained a higher degree of interaction between schools and community. In many cases DCAP funding has acted as a catalyst for ongoing activity resulting in self-sufficient projects which no longer need external funding.

Although it has mainly been existing Parent and Citizen organisation members who have been actively involved in DCAP administration many others have given time and expertise to assist particular projects. Most areas see the inclusion of a wider cross-section of the community as a priority objective for the immediate future.

(b) Transition from School to Work

This case study was devloped in a similar manner to the previous one. Transition from school to work is a blanket term for a range of programs including careers education, special transition courses, link programs, employment awareness camps and work experience.

These programs have had the additional impetus of Commonwealth money since the Commonwealth Transition Program was established in 1979.

The emergence of Transition Education as a worthwhile curriculum initiative has depended on schools and their communities examining the role of the school in the content of its society. Specific courses (e.g. Alternative Courses) have been developed for those students most likely to experience difficulty in the transition from school to work.

Work experience has been available in the Riverina Region since 1972 and the numbers of schools and students involved has increased rapidly since 1976 so that all High Schools and Central Schools in the region had work experience programs in 1981. The early work experience

programs aimed at providing a base from which students could choose their future career paths. As a result of a series of seminars, teachers and community members have now indicated that they see work experience as an exercise in career awareness and more a tool for preparing young people for their entry into the adult community.

In an attempt to overcome the problem of the limited range of occupations available locally, camps are held in Wagga, Sydney and Melbourne.

In 1980 two schools established Link Courses with local Technical and Further Education (T.A.F.E.) Colleges. Students spend time at the College investigating a range of courses of interest to them. By 1981 16 High Schools and 6 Central Schools were involved in such courses.

Riverina schools have found that many pupils who enter Year 11 do not remain at school to complete their studies in Year 12. Schools conducted surveys in 1980 to find those pupils who would prefer alternative programs to the usual Higher School Certificate (HSC) courses. No school found any such pupil. Obviously employers, pupils and parents place high emphasis on the HSC so that pupils remaining at school desire this qualification even if their grades on it are low.

Personal Development has been introduced as an integrated course in Years 7 to 10 aimed at leading pupils to an increased awareness of values, attitudes and relationships. Parents and community support is needed before these courses can start and sample materials are presented to parents before classes commence.

Careers advisors are present in all post-primary schools in the region. Their major responsibility now is to stimulate interest in career planning. All schools in the region have access to a school counsellor who supplies diagnostic and psychological services, advice on personal development and careers and provides a personal counselling service to pupils and parents.

There has been a range of other activities in the region including occupational and employment awareness projects, careers nights and markets, bringing community members into the classroom to teach pre-employment skills.

The report concludes that the curriculum options discussed identify the degree to which schools are receptive to the needs of their students, are appreciative of the resources and contribution to the local community, and are aware of the responsibility to seek attainment of the general aims of secondary education.

The Tasmanian ELD Project

The Tasmanian ELD project differed from projects in the other States in that no attempt was made to foster activities with ELD consequences or to seek examples which highlighted ELD themes. Rather it was an investigation of fairly typical rural schools and their surrounding areas to find if a recent initiative in rural education had contributed to local development.

The initiative studied was the upgrading of district schools to district high schools. District schools were primary-secondary schools (to Year 9 or 10) which were originally the consolidated rural schools called Area schools. Like the area schools they had a "practical"

rural based curriculum but the more "academic" high schools (Years 7 to 10 in Tasmania) had proved more popular by the 1970's. A 1978 report recommended the extension of educational opportunities in most District Schools and where this extension was provided, renamed them District High Schools.

Three areas were chosen for study, one where the school was effectively extended as far back as 1968, one extended prior to the 1978 report and one in the process of being extended since the report.

The extension of educational opportunity involves building programs, worth upwards of a million dollars, in each school. These programs will come in several stages over many years. They are unlikely to have major impacts on the local economies as city firms are likely to be the only tenderers for work of this magnitude and are likely to bring their existing workers with them.

Staffing has increased markedly with the extension of the schools, particularly in the proportion of more highly qualified teachers. While these changes have had important economic consequences for the local centres these have been reduced by teachers commuting from city areas or other rural towns. The schools are also seen as economically important in encouraging new residents to settle and attracting business with more parents visiting for school functions, collecting children after school and so on.

The schools have had limited cultural and social impact on their communities in the months preceding the study. One school produced a local newspaper and this was valued in the community. There were very few examples of Adult Education courses or drama and music events staged by the school for the community.

Parent meetings and fund raising events along with school activities were important socially in bringing people together and building social cohesion, but there was considerable scope for more activities.

Sporting facilities at all three schools are used by the local communities. One school had a hall and canteen complex which provided the only catering facilities in the area and was used for wedding receptions and similar functions.

Since the study was conducted one area has become part of the Country Areas Program and there is a considerable amount of local involvement in producing submissions, managing the program locally and in educational activities flowing from the program. As well the parents have taken the initiative in organising a series of workshops on different aspects of the curriculum. In a second region a new principal has been promoting ideas which may have important consequences for local development. The school has offered a typing service to the local community at the same time providing part-time work for some unemployed leavers. The initiative has been taken towards using an unused school house as a crêche and local people are following this up. The principal believes that crêches are important in bringing people together and in developing political skills through such activities as arranging funding.

It seems that the schools studied are not currently maximising their potential to assist local development in a number of areas. Given the stimulus of outside funds or some interested people there is much that can be done.

3. How education can lead directly to local economic development

There are some obvious ways in which education contributes directly to local economies. The Tasmanian ELD study confirmed that teacher salaries are a major economic input in small rural towns. However, this depends on the teachers being local residents. In one centre many teachers commuted about sixty kilometers from the city rather than live locally. Obviously such commuters will be of little direct assistance to local traders.

Schools contribute directly if they buy stores and materials locally or use local tradespeople and this was also found in the Tasmanian study. But centralised purchasing and maintenance systems make such assistance far less significant than it could be. Programs such as the Victorian Country Education Project, which have ensured that funds are spent locally, are likely to contribute more to local economic development.

The various studies revealed several examples of school based business enterprises. Several local newspapers were supported initially by the Country Areas Program in New South Wales until they became self-sufficient from advertising revenue. The school produced paper in Sheffield, in Tasmania, has made a major impact in its local community.

There are several school-community groups in Victoria preparing and marketing curriculum materials. When asked about the significance of this for local development one teacher replied, "It's great up our way, we have money coming out our ears. Just so long as it isn't in competition with existing businesses. As a result local people feel successful and the money goes back into community and education resources".

Many rural schools have associated farms which operate as commercial concerns. In some cases these farms have specialised, and for example, become studs. There were several other similar examples revealed by the State projects.

While these examples indicate that school businesses can have considerable economic importance there may be associated problems. In particular unless school businesses are developed in co-operation with employers and unions they could threaten existing businesses or jobs and hence reduce local economic well-being. In some States it may be illegal for schools to engage in such activities although community groups associated with the school are freer to act.

At Pemberton in Western Australia a school and its students have established a trout hatchery which is becoming a tourist attraction for the local area. This has both educational advantages for the students involved and economic importance for the town.

In Western Australia there is a proposal for a school to cut loose from State curriculum guides and examination systems and tie itself directly to the local economy. This is a school serving an aboriginal population. Currently the best students are sent out of the area to the city, to both their own and the communities' dissatisfaction. The proposal is to link the school activities to the economic life of the community. If the adults, and many of the students, are out mustering cattle, then this will be part of the school's activities. In this way the school will directly serve local economic realities, but the cost could be that students will leave school without the certification demanded in white society.

The last example highlights the conflict that can underly ELD issues. It also presents the idea of education and local economic activity being so merged into the one process that it is difficult to say where one stops and the other begins. No doubt a very different style of education would emerge from such a process. But would it necessarily be at the cost of the student's ability to function in the wider world, beyond the local community? The balancing of students' needs with those of the local community is a major theme of the Western Australian ELD project.

4. How education gives indirect support to local economies

One of the features of the ELD projects and associated studies has been to document the variety of contributions that schools in small rural centres make to local economies. This becomes most obvious when the school is closed down and the associated town no longer survives.

Brown and Maisey (1980) in their study of Ejanding, a small country town in Western Australia, showed how important the school was in preserving a precarious economic balance.

Ejanding is a community of approximately 100 people who live on scattered farms about 200 kilometres east of Perth. Like many other farming communities, consolidation of farms in the district in recent years has resulted in a reduced population. The Ejanding community consists of the families with children attending the Ejanding school. The school is central to the continuance of the community. Education policies have a major impact on the economic life of the community. For example, the letting of a contract for bussing students to the school provides enough supplementary income to the owner of the local general store to enable it to remain open. Furthermore, the school bus route effectively defines the local community, since the comings and goings of people around the school determine who they talk to and where they shop. School bus routes also determine the enrolment numbers at the school which are critically close to minimum numbers. Local residents fear that bus policies could result in the school closing. They believe that should the school be closed, their own community would be absorbed into nearby larger communities and they can point to other places where this sequence has occurred as a consequence of school consolidation policies.

If something as apparently minor as the school bussing arrangements can control the fate of a rural town then the overall role of education in local development needs to be taken very seriously indeed.

There are many other ways in which schools may have an economic significance beyond the direct one. For example a local carpenter may be kept viable by maintenance work in a school. A teachers aide or secretarial job may keep a young person in the area who would otherwise move to the city. School farms often provide work or hire equipment from local farmers.

Youth unemployment is a serious problem in rural areas where the range of jobs is particularly limited especially limited for females and where unemployed young people may be isolated by the lack of public transport (Stoessiger, 1980; 1981). Support, in their home environment, may well be essential for the young people themselves as well as contributing to the local economy. For example, in a rural centre the school is likely to be the only body able to sponsor an Educational

Program for Unemployed Youth (E.P.U.Y.) course or a Transition Education course. Such courses employ instructors, result in a small increase in allowances for the unemployed who take them and may improve the local employment prospects of school leavers.

The New South Wales case study of the Transition from School to Work program noted the increasing tendancy of students to leave before obtaining their Higher School Certificate. This presumably results from increased importance attached to getting a job in the current employment situation and may be leading to higher levels of youth unemployment in rural areas (Stoessiger, 1982). Schools are responding to this by offering alternative courses and "Other Approved Studies" but so far have not been able to reduce the trend (New South Wales report, page 32).

Schools can also assist the employment prospects of girls by encouraging them to consider a wider range of careers than those conventionally followed. The New South Wales study mentioned this (page 42) with reference to the link courses conducted in association with technical colleges where the evaluation of the 1980 programs showed that courses must "break down the stereotyped sex-roles traditionally applied to some occupations, particularly to encourage girls to seek jobs in a wider range of vocational areas".

Some schools have even gone into the area of creating jobs for their leavers. At Maryborough, in Victoria, the school and local community have started a business of creating chamois-leather shirts. Jobs have been created and a new local industry is developing (Victorian report, page 36).

The education system has the potential to contribute to local economies by teaching skills of value. It might be expected that Technical and Further Education (T.A.F.E.) would have an important role in this. All too often T.A.F.E. just does not exist in rural areas or it is bound by centrally determined curricula which are not directly relevant to rural areas. This is not so for the T.A.F.E. program centred on Wagin in Western Australia. Here the local co-ordinator runs a myriad of short courses of direct relevance to the local community. (This program is described in detail in Section 6). The area has a problem with salt accumulation in soils and tree growing is being promoted to reduce the salinity. Recently ninety people attended a seminar on seed collection and tree growing organised by the T.A.F.E. co-ordinator. The importance of courses such as these to local economic development may well be out of all proportion to the small amounts of money needed to initiate them.

5. Education and local political development

As in the case of economic development there seems to be no doubt that education does contribute to local political development, viewed in its widest sense.

The very existence of a school provides a focus for political activity, directed towards its improvement, or retention where that is threatened.

The study, Cascades - The Birth of a Community (Hyde, 1982) showed that even the absence of a school can be the rallying point for local political activity.

Cascades is a newly developed farming area, north-west of Esperance in Western Australia. In 1972, some four years after the opening up of the area a public meeting was held to obtain support for the establishment of a primary school. A Progress Association was formed and contact was established with the State Education Department. During 1973 meetings were held to discuss the proposed school, its site and difficulties to be overcome.

The question of the school site, and the new townsite that it would be part of, divided the local community into two factions. Education Department officers visited the area and the competing school sites but stalled on the establishment of a school. The study reports that the disagreement over the school site, "... was the beginning of a six year long conflict, for which some local people believe the Education Department to be partly to blame. The townsite issue was to bitterly divide the community and result in the demise of the Cascade Progress Association".

It was not until 1978 that the issue was resolved. The study notes, "There is a strong view in the community that the argument delayed the establishment of a permanent school by at least five years. However once made, the decision tended to bring the community much closer together".

While the study documents the development of a politically aware and active community it obviously had its costs in both educational and local development terms. Although the determination of school sites is a local government matter in Western Australia, it is an open question whether the Education Department could have tried to play a more direct role to both foster local political development and minimise the less desirable consequences.

The Carnarvon School of the Air study (Fitzpatrick, 1982 b) documents the relationship of the school's Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) with the Education Department of Western Australia. Again the very provision of an education facility has led to considerable local political development. Again there have been divisions in the community involved. Again the Education Department took a passive role.

The division in the Carnarvon School of the Air (C.S.A.) community was a geographical one arising from the school's vast area of operation. The study concludes "that there has not been so much a 'division', ..., as an integrating of two groups that, historically and geographically, have been relatively separate." It seems likely that the integration of the two groups resulted from their combined political action on behalf of the School of the Air.

The report notes that the C.S.A. P&C was an effective body, politically, from its establishment in 1969. "The C.S.A. P&C was sufficiently attuned to the educational and political system to know how to apply pressure." By the mid 1970's they had obtained good facilities and were less active politically.

At the same time the national group, the Isolated Childrens Parents' Association (I.C.P.A.), was becoming more influential in the area. Many of the C.S.A. P&C members were active in both groups and I.C.P.A. as a national body, stimulated the local group into more activity. The report comments, "Politically, the I.C.P.A. put the P&C's fingers on the pulse of national and state educational and political trends and

sentiments." "The net result of the I.C.P.A. - C.S.A. nexus is that it would be hard to imagine any other P&C in the State more closely monitoring the pulse of the school, staff, students, parents and education authorities or more able and willing to act accordingly."

In both the Cascades and C.S.A. cases the spur to political development was educational facilities perceived as inadequate by the local people. Where there is a high level of political activity it is not surprising to see different factions emerging over important issues. While these internal disputes can be disruptive, in both cases the community seems to have resolved its problems and politically capable and effective communities have resulted.

The Tasmanian study of the extension of educational opportunities in District Schools and their renaming to District High Schools shows almost no political consequences for the local areas. However, one of the schools in the study is taking ELD ideas seriously and local political activity is emerging. For example, the parents have recently taken political action to upgrade the shower facilities and to retain an empty teacher residence for use as a crêche. The school principal, when talking about local political development, said, "I believe that crêches are the single most important politicising agency in a community because they get people together from all walks of life within a community. ...It's an equalising sort of arrangement and already we've seen in our area, through this crêche the development of political skills, getting government support, getting State government support, getting social welfare support."

The New South Wales and Victorian reports of their Country Areas Programs (CAP) show a deliberate encouraging of local people development by the education systems involved. For example, the New South Wales program aims to involve community members in planning, implementing and evaluating the various projects. It aims to encourage communities to work together, to determine their needs and to share existing resources. The report on the New South Wales program (called DCAP in that State) comments, "... it is probable that the contribution made to rural education in New South Wales as a result of DCAP initiated activities has been the structured involvement of parents and citizens in planning, administering and evaluating educational innovations ....". The report notes that more needs to be done. For example, it has to date, largely been those community members already involved in P&C groups who have participated in decision-making about the program. Following recent efforts, "most districts see the inclusion of a wider cross-section of the community as a priority objective for the immediate future." However the report notes successes, "Whole communities have been regenerated as people have identified local resources and acted together to improve education for their children."

In reviewing the Victorian Country Education Program (CEP) the former director, Ken Egan, concluded that improving rural education is centred on political processes. "Local people need to learn these processes and to take part in them" he said. The report of the Victorian project shows many examples of local political development. One fortuitous development was the lack of support staff provided to local CEP programs. The report comments, "The lack of support may have made the locals angry but it did force them to solve the problems in their own way. This not only improved their confidence but also developed a sense of independence which they have never relinquished." (Victorian Report, page 19). This is another example of local political development coming through conflict with the central education bureaucracy.

Similarly when the State Education Department froze the program's funds and hence threatened to end local control, the regional Area Committees, "rose to the occasion and lobbied with their local politicians." (Victorian Report, page 21). Finally the Minister for Education released the funds. The report notes, "In addition their Area Committees' roles in the victory gave them an insight into political process and convinced them that they could take matters into their own hands. It also confirmed our conviction that mastering the political process is the core curriculum of disadvantage." (Victorian Report, page 22).

In the third year of the Victorian CEP the central planning committee (P.C.) decided to hand control of the program to the regional Area Committees (A.C.'s); "... but rather than simply hand it (control) over, the P.C. set up a series of joint A.C.-P.C. meetings." The process was designed to, "force A.C.'s to think about power and its responsibilities before they actually received it." In this example a part of the education system can be seen to be working consciously for local political development. The process did not stop at Area level but control was progressively handed down to local project level.

At the State level there has been an important political development. The Project Areas have formed an Association, a body that can be politically active at State level on behalf of the local rural areas. The Association also provides a forum for the exchange of information between Areas.

The Victorian report in its concluding paragraphs, comments, "Considering the importance of the political process in the Country Education Project it is surprising that political process is not taught and practised within the education system itself." Also,"...it has always been a sad feature of the Project that senior students within schools have not been introduced into the decision-making process of Area and Sub-Area Committees."

6. How education can support local society and culture

Education, by its very presence in some form or another in a rural area is an important source of support for local society and culture. Education can be the virtual creator of a local society in an area where the common element in people's lives is their children attending the same school or, as in a School of the Air where education provides both the rationale and the means of putting people in contact.

The school newspapers mentioned previously are an obvious way in which a school can contribute to its local society. A few schools run community radio stations. School creches are also important supports for local society, and where they are combined with adult classes or "second chance" education programs (e.g. New Horizons in Tasmania) they can be even more valuable.

Where school libraries are open to the public or where joint school community libraries have been developed there are obvious benefits to local people. One of the areas in the N.S.W. Country Areas Program has provided a caravan fitted out as a community library (N.S.W. Report, page 14). The caravan is transported by local government vehicles and is located in each of the participating schools for a rostered period for children and community members to use.

The school can be the focus for music and drama events in the local community. The Tasmanian report could find very few examples of such activities being provided by the schools studied. However, where funds have been made available and community people have been involved in deciding how they will be spent, as in the Country Areas Program in N.S.W. and Victoria, drama and musical activities have flourished. In N.S.W. the Program has provided high quality portable stage extensions and sound and lighting equipment for use in local halls.

In the Mallee Tracks Area of Victoria a "needs survey" of the region revealed music was a high priority. A local talented musician was employed to teach, develop and co-ordinate a music program. To support him, three part-time enthusiasts, turned up by the survey, were employed to travel around the small schools. Classes are now run for children during the day and for parents at night, using over a thousand musical instruments which the survey revealed in homes, town halls, local band groups and locked in school cupboards.

In the King-Ovens Valley Area in Victoria the CEP Committee found many old people who could remember historical events, folklore and songs of the old times. Children and parents went out and collected songs and stories, wrote plays and comedies and sketches about local events. Their drama program results in a yearly "O.K. Show" which enjoys massive local support.

One of the key features of the Victorian programs has been the involvement of parents and community members in the activities. The aim of this approach was to develop the skills and talents of local people so that if the teacher concerned left, as often happens in rural areas, the parents and others would be able to continue the program and help the incoming teacher to carry on the activities. The Victorian report refers to this approach as the development of 'co-operative competence', and sees it as key feature in local development.

Art and Craft programs and a whole range of Technical and Further Education (T.A.F.E.) courses are valued by rural people. As the Victorian report notes, the usual model of the provision of T.A.F.E. courses has been through T.A.F.E. colleges in major centres with occasional out-reach programs in rural areas. Developments in Western Australia and Victoria are challenging this model and show how locally based programs can cheaply and effectively deliver technical courses and at the same time contribute to local development.

The Western Australian development is a T.A.F.E. program centred on Wagin, a wheatbelt town with about 1,000 inhabitants, approximately 230 kilometres south-east of Perth. The local community had been pressing for some years for the establishment of a T.A.F.E. college but the small local population made this hard to justify. In 1979 an innovative approach was adopted. A T.A.F.E. co-ordinator was appointed to determine the demand for training and other technical courses in the area, and to mobilize existing community resources to satisfy local needs. The philosophy behind the scheme was essentially one of enabling local communities to determine their own needs and have them met in their own locality. One of the perceived advantages of this would be that technical learning could occur in association with the work life of the local community (Cluer, 1981).

Where the co-ordinator learns of the need for particular courses he seeks out skilled local residents as instructors and uses existing facilities (halls, farm buildings, garages, schools etc) as venues. Skilled residents and community facilities provide alternatives to the capital intensive facility usually built and staffed to meet such needs.

So far the scheme has net with considerable success. The co-ordinator has organised hundreds of courses, the great majority one or two days long in contrast to the longer courses offered in T.A.F.E. colleges. Topics included Introduction to Local Government, Farm Fibre Glass, Bush Fire Control, Practical Piggery, Seed Collecting and Tree Growing and Microwave Cooking along with a whole range of specialised agricultural topics. The scheme has expanded from the towns around Wagin to encompass 30 centres in the surrounding areas. Yet the total budget, including the co-ordinators salary is only $40,000. On financial grounds alone it is no wonder that the T.A.F.E. Division in Western Australia is planning to use the same model in other rural areas.

A similar scheme was the Technical and Life Long Education Program conducted in the Western Wimmera Country Education Program in Victoria.

A local committee assessed the skills and activities requested by local people and then set about finding the human and physical resources to satisfy the expressed needs. In order to bring the courses to the people and reduce travel, classes were organised in schools (where principals were co-operative), community halls, wool sheds, disused garages, church halls and Agricultural Showgrounds. To run the classes local skilled people were used, but where they were unavailable the committee negotiated with an Agricultural or Technical College outside of the area to secure skilled personnel to run courses. At all times the demand was for the skills to be passed on to local people.

All courses were designed to meet local needs and always avoided the long-term prescriptive courses of academic institutions. When a course finished the necessary equipment was moved to the next centre and a local person, if available, employed to run the classes.

In the first year 700 people, ranging from farmers, adults, pensioners, unemployed youth to school students, enrolled in courses ranging from technical classes such as welding and carpentry, hobby classes such as leather work, cake decorating, as well as painting and agricultural courses. In the second year enrolments rose to 1000. Patricipants were charged enrolment fees in order to move the program towards self-sufficiency. Thus the Area Committee had become a major educational provider.

In assessing this program the authors of the Victorian Report commented, "These classes, above all, had begun to restore the old linkages and networks which had died as a result of school closures and increasing farm size. This was genuine community rejuvenation."

These two programs give some important insights into education and local development.

Firstly, attempts to transplant city models to country areas may well be misguided because the model is inappropriate or the costs associated with introducing it to dispersed regions may be exorbitant.

Secondly, appropriate models may be found by allowing local people to express their needs and to come up with solutions.

Thirdly, models which work in rural areas may be actually more economic than their centralised counterparts. This is more likely to be so when attempts are made to build on existing facilities and talents.

All four ELD studies indicate that "the right people" are of paramount importance if education is to contribute to local cultural and social development. This can mean a T.A.F.E. co-ordinator who is willing to get out and be told what local people want or a teacher in a school who is sensitive to local culture and willing to take supportive action. One suggestion for increasing teacher sensitivity is a community based teacher induction process. New teachers often with city backgrounds, cannot be automatically expected to fit into local society or be aware of local cultural aspirations. The community is the basis of such knowledge and it should be their responsibility (perhaps even a formal one) to introduce new teachers to their new community.

Rural unemployment is high, particularly among young women. Yet studies have indicated that they are the most likely to be isolated from local society when they are unemployed (Stoessiger, 1980). Thus anything that education can do to support the young unemployed is important for rural societies. The provision of E.P.U.Y. and Transition Courses, sponsored by the local school, is important and has been mentioned before. However, these are "band-aid" activities which help only small numbers of unemployed leavers for small periods of time. A more concerted community based support scheme would have more chance of success. Such a scheme could involve schools and T.A.F.E. in providing useful courses along with community job creation and voluntary work projects. There seems to be enormous scope for education to contribute more effectively to local development in this area.

7. Education as a partner in the provision of joint resources

Many of the examples already given are of joint resources, that is, of resources that are used both by some part of the education system and by the community at large. School-community libraries are an obvious example. The ELD project has thrown up many more examples and they provide an insight into the attitude and type of planning required of administrators, policy makers and teaching staff for effective local development.

An interesting example comes from South Australia. In that State, school councils have been given considerable financial autonomy, including the power to borrow money. As a result, a number of school councils are joining with local government and other community groups to fund joint facilities such as halls and gymnasiums.

Both the schools and the communities benefit by getting access to a resource that neither could afford from their individual resources. But there are likely to be additional local development consequences. Because the decision making has been devolved to school level, local people are in a position to decide what is best for both school and community. This may well lead to a local social and political development as well.

The new technologies are likely to have important consequences for rural areas and, in the form of the micro-computer, are beginning to appear in schools. Viewdata, Videotext and a national satellite are likely to revolutionise information provision, particularly in the country. It would seem to be sensible to find ways to share the facilities, particularly where schools could use them during the day and the community after hours. The New South Wales Country Areas Program is planning to do just that with the micro-computers being provided for some schools. After hours they will be available for use in introductory computer courses and possibly for local businesses and farmers. Such computers could also act as the terminal for public access Videotext systems when they become more widely available.

Another community resource that can be partly provided by education, is people, not just the music teacher who takes classes after hours, but people working directly for local development. The Victorian Country Education Program shows the way. For several years the Program has been funding Area Co-ordinators to assist the Program in particular areas.

"Because of the crucial role these people were playing, their retention became a top priority and the search began for ways and means to fund them even if the project funds ceased. This eventually led to attempts to develop a joint funding of a multi-purpose person for rural areas, and this has now been achieved in three project areas. In two of them, the joint funding has come from four agencies: The Country Education Project, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, the Community Education Unit from the Education Department and Local Government. The first three agencies have provided the cash, and local government has provided back-up services in the form of office space, advertising, duplicating facilities, and a car and maintenance services. The important feature here is that for the first time, local governments were prepared to come into the field of employing a community development type person as against a community facilities type person. The other feature was that sharing again was becoming a dominant issue not only in the provision of that person, but also in that two or three local government areas were joining together to share these multi-purpose people. In addition the Councils learned that the CEP Committee structure provided an excellent information network, something they had previously lacked." (Victorian Report, page 44).

The Victorian report notes some problems. There is a tendency for each agency to separately extract their pound of flesh from the employee rather than coming together and developing a common policy which has the flexibility to meet local needs (Victorian Report, pages 44-45).

There are many government services where sharing of resources may lead to more effective services at a reduced cost. The combination of Agricultural extension education with T.A.F.E. as in the Wagin Scheme is a good example. In some cases it might be possible to locate Commonwealth Employment Services offices in schools. This would have obvious value for students considering future careers and would make it easier for the school to keep in touch with unemployed leavers and assist them where possible. It may reduce costs by sharing office space and staff.

A Western Australian paper (Angus et. al., 1981) notes that, "To the layman, the involvement of several agencies operating in the same field is evidence of poor management and wastage of monies." However, the paper goes on to list the difficulties in achieving interdepartmental co-operation and suggests that improved co-ordination has not yet demonstrated that significant cost savings will result.

If education is to work constructively for local development through the provision of joint resources the following points have been shown to be important.

(a) Where a resource (human or material) is being considered for a local area it should be routine to examine the possibility of community and interdepartmental co-operation.

(b) Co-ordination is most required at local level and hence giving local people the responsibility of seeing that it happens is more likely to be effective than trying to plan it from government departments.

(c) Co-operative projects are more likely to occur if the financial decision making (and responsibility) is devolved to local level (for example the school councils in South Australia).

(d) Local (sometimes unorthodox) solutions and practices should be used to meet local problems.

The Australian ELD projects show that shared resources are being provided in rural areas and, when encouraged to do so, local people are willing to contribute to their provision and management.

8. How education can inhibit local development

While the Australian ELD project has revealed a number of examples of education working to promote local development there are also plenty of examples to the contrary. These can also be valuable in pointing the way forward.

One of the Western Australian papers (Angus et. al., 1982) presents several examples of educational policies which may operate against the interests of individual communities. The centralised provision of upper secondary can denude a community of its most able young people and encourage migration away from rural areas. This is the case in all Tasmanian rural areas as "matriculation" colleges (Years 11 and 12) are centralised in the city areas. An additional negative consequence of this policy is that many young people are unwilling to leave home to continue their education and hence can get only low status work or become unemployed (Stoessiger; 1980). An experiment to overcome this problem was conducted in the Charlon area of Victoria. In 1982 eight small secondary schools were linked with a telephone conference bridge in an attempt to share teacher expertise between schools and provide wider group interactions by linking small groups of students. Similar experiments are being conducted using shortwave radio and computer links.

A second example is where an education system demands strict adherence to common organisational or curriculum patterns. This stiffles the adaption of educational provision to accommodate or reflect special local needs. There is an example of this in the study of the Carnarvon School of the Air (C.S.A.) (Fitzpatrick, 1982 b). The education system initially had difficulty responding to the special needs of a school of the air with its dispersed classroom and where mothers do much of the teaching. Hence when the C.S.A. was having difficulties broadcasting because of noise problems, "A senior departmental officer saw the complaint as an 'emotional plea of the Headmaster ..... in an attempt to have Carnarvon listed ahead of other centres which had been waiting much longer' (for improved facilities)." (Fitzpatrick, 1982 b, p. 34). However, initial difficulties were resolved and parents became satisfied with the resources provided. The C.S.A. study suggests that there is a need for flexibility and opportunism by administrators if education is to contribute fully to local development.

Similarly if teaching staff are isolated from the community there is unlikely to be school-community communication and co-operation out of which local development can grow. This can happen where the education system trains and appoints its staff to suit urban areas and is inflexible in applying its regulations to rural areas. As a result teachers who would prefer rural areas may end up in the cities and teachers who prefer the city end up with country appointments.

The utilization of new technologies especially suited to the information needs of rural areas is likely to be retarded if an inflexible 'all-schools-are-equal' policy is maintained. (Fitzpatrick, 1982 a, 8). Education

systems can do most if they are flexible and opportunistic in responding to local needs.

Teachers have responsibilities to the education system, to their pupils and to local communities. The summary report of the studies of five community organisations in Western Australia (Fitzpatrick, 1982 a, 20) shows that this may lead to quite acute "divided loyalties". Teachers trying to obtain resources or action for the local school or community may come into conflict with their superiors. If teachers see their roles to be encouraging students to leave their areas to take advantage of city living they may be seen by the local community to be failing to make local community needs central to the curriculum. This is not an easy problem. The report suggests that it is more likely to arise where teachers are very temporary and not integrated into the local community.

In discussing community-education department relations Fitzpatrick (1982 a, 23-26) notes "... as the discussion of matters gets further from their origins, the subtleties of local feelings, circumstances, personalities and issues get lost; subtleties that are sometimes crucial to understanding and resolving the issue." He suggests that where authority can be devolved to local level and where administrators are not regulation bound, many problems can be resolved. "The studies and other research suggest that without feelings of local control and 'ownership', that decisions are locally made, that the programme deals with local needs, many locals simply are not interested."

The practise of regionalisation was mentioned in both Western Australia and Victoria. Regionalisation in Australian education is the division of a State into a small number of "regions". An officer is responsible for certain administrative tasks within the region. At first sight this might be welcomed as part of the administrative devolution mentioned above. However, the suggestion from Victoria and Western Australia is that the region can become another administrative step that separates local people from effective action. The Victorian Report (p. 45) suggests that regionalisation should be a genuine devolution to the region of power over decision making, and that local people should come together to exercise that power, if local development is to result.

9. Unlocking local resources

One of the highlights of the ELD project has been to document how a small change in perspective can lead to a more productive way of looking both at education and the local areas it serves.

Hence "development" in rural areas is not viewed as implying a deficiency in those areas with the need for large amounts of outside resources. Rather it is seen as something local people can do for themselves given the effective and responsive use of existing resources and with small amounts of additional funds having a catalytic role. The resources for local development are already there and education can play an important role in unlocking them.

The musical instruments turned up in the survey of a Victorian region (Section 6) is one of many examples. Over a thousand instruments, largely unused, could be found in one of the more dispersed and isolated Victorian areas. On a deficiency model that region was very lacking in musical resources yet a simply survey showed an abundance of resources including skilled local people.

The Riverina region of New South Wales is steeped in history and has a unique environment. The Western rivers played a significant part in the

establishment of both State and the nation through their role as transport links. The provision of mobile "camping banks" which can be shared by different schools have unlocked this history and environment as educational resources.

The concept of education helping provide the preconditions for local development was examined in a Western Australian report (Angus et.al., 1981, 9-10). These preconditions might include physical or social resources or even a psychological disposition towards development. Several ways in which education can contribute to both the establishment and identification of preconditions were suggested including:

* Educational facilities in a community attract skilled workers or business people and so contribute to the development of the community.

* Education enables the assembly of a skilled local work-force with attitudes needed for local development activities.

* Educational institutions provide facilities and resources for use during community, social and cultural activities.

* Educational services in a community develop entrepreneurial skills needed to facilitate economic and social development.

* The presence of educational facilities increase a community's attractiveness to industry and commerce.

In its fourth year the Victorian Country Education Project was faced with the problem of fostering new programs when most of their funds were tied up in recurrent grants. Their solution was to develop local self-sufficiency in the seeking of grants.

The first phase of the strategy was the development of a data bank of alternative funding agencies. While the Area Resource surveys had been completed an external survey hadn't been carried out. The approach was not to simply record and disseminate the information; instead key Area personnel and a representative of the funding agency were brought together for discussion to ensure an understanding of their guidelines which are never apparent in the written word. To capitalise on this, 'model submissions' were developed on the spot. As a result of their efforts funding and support was obtained in the following areas:

* Research into the needs of correspondence children, itinerant families etc.

* Sport coaching and recreation programs.

* Transition education programs.

* Migrant education.

(Victorian Report, pp. 47-48)

Programs were encouraged to become self-funding. A theatre group in one area now is self-sufficient through the sale of tickets for their shows. Local talent has been unlocked not only in drama but in staging and promoting theatrical enterprises.

The Victorian program realised that there was a need to build

continuity into projects, especially in small rural schools where the teachers change often. Continuity in these situations depends on parents and community. Hence the program funded people to work with small communities to develop skills and knowledge so that they could assist new teachers to continue the projects.

The Victorian Report asks (page 56) "If funds can be used to promote people into creating innovative ways of solving their educational/ recreational problems, why cannot small grants be given to similar groups to ask them to look at their economic problems and possible ways of overcoming them?" As a result of examining this question several Project Areas are now considering forming themselves into co-operatives to promote economic activities in their areas and provide more employment for school leavers.

In summary this section shows how education can unlock local resources for:

* Teaching - both the people and the equipment needed
* Learning about history and the environment
* Attracting funds for educational projects
* Making programs self-sufficient
* Managing on-going projects
* Promoting economic activities and employment

As well education is an important precondition for development and by taking that role seriously could do even more for local development.

10. Conclusions

(a) Education as an adaptive system

The study indicates the need for education to be an adaptive system. It can meet local development needs if it is not centrally determined and regulation bound. It must be able to seize on special local circumstances to enrol local enthusiasts and respond to chance events. The study has revealed examples of schools and government sponsored projects working to adapt to local circumstances and, in Western Australia, a State education department reviewing its operation and becoming a more adaptive system.

Implications

Adaptive systems can follow any one of a number of paths to meet their goals. If the goal is both education and local development the paths can be as diverse as setting up crèches or establishing businesses to employ school leavers. Similarly, several paths are more likely to ensure that goals are met. This could mean students who learn computing with their parents after hours, or the willingness to seek joint funding with community groups for school facilities, or the provision of non-institutionalised learning resources (e.g. Videotext) to the community at large.

(b) Education and political development

Education, even when it takes no positive action, can be a major spur to local political development. The absence of a school, or inadequate facilities, can be the rallying point for local political activity. Where there is a high level of political activity different factions may emerge, and while this may be disruptive, where the communities can resolve their disputes politically effective bodies emerge.

Education can be a passive observer of political development or it can, as in the case of the Country Areas Program, deliberately encourage such development.

The Victorian Country Education Program in particular, has worked consciously to promote the political power of local people and its success suggests that a similar approach could be adopted by other parts of the education system.

Implications

If education accepted its potential for local political development it would develop policies aimed at the gradual handing over of power to local people. Power would not be transferred carte blanche, but inside a system of checks and balances designed to ensure that educational goals are given first priority.

(c) Education and social and cultural development

Education is an important source of support for social and cultural activities in rural communities. It can be the catalyst for such activities where it provides the common element in peoples lives. Education provides the only cultural institution in some rural areas, yet educators often consider this to be a very incidental role. Where there is someone enthusiastic, cultural and social activities happen, otherwise the support can be very small. The Country Areas Programs have shown just how great the need is, and by implication, how little has been done.

Implications

There seems to be no reason why the few regions "disadvantaged" enough to be declared part of the Country Areas Program should be the only ones where educational resources directly assist local society and culture. It could be part of the everyday workings of the education system in rural areas. Only small (catalytic) amounts of money are required when programs use existing resources and facilities and build on local talent, and when resources and people are shared by a variety of groups or agencies.

(d) Education and economic development

Education can be a major economic force in rural areas. Something as apparently minor as bussing arrangements can threaten the existence of a small town. Education contributes directly through teacher salaries or by becoming a part of the economic life of a community (for example, school-community businesses). It contributes indirectly by increasing the viability of local traders and services, by providing courses of value to local farmers and businesses and by supporting unemployed school leavers.

Implications

Consistent with educational goals remaining as their first priority, education systems could do much to maximise the local economic advantages from the provision of education in rural areas. Education systems could encourage joint planning with local people, schools to buy locally, teachers to live locally, and could support properly established school-community businesses.

(e) Education as a barrier, or the key, to local development

Too often education works as a barrier to local development. It can do this by exporting talented rural students to the city, by centralised and inflexible organizational patterns or by isolating itself from the community.

Yet education can act as the key that unlocks local resources. These can be musical instruments in the Mallee or the environment and history of the Western rivers in the Riverina. Most importantly it can unlock the talents of local people as teachers, resource providers, grant seekers, and as managers of on-going educational programs.

Much of this seems to revolve around the attitude of the people in education to local communities. If they are viewed by some deficiency model, lacking in education or talents, a centralised provision of services is the likely outcome. The alternative view is that of encouraging local co-operation and competency for both education and local development.

Some of the studies reported on here reveal a nostalgia for the close communities and co-operative life styles once a feature of rural life. Today there is a paradoxical situation. Rural people want access to city based resources and culture but they also want to preserve their rural identity. The ELD studies suggest that there may well be ways to provide the best of both worlds and at the same time rebuild the co-operative basis of rural life.

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